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THE THREEFOLD SUN AND THE CHRIST-EXPERIENCE

From a Lecture by RUDOLF STEINER, dated April 24th, 1922.

Before the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, Christ was always spoken of as a Being that lived outside the earth, and this is one of the truths that humanity has lost altogether. In fact to-day such a conception is even looked upon as heretical.

But why should such a conception be designated as un-Christian, since the first Fathers of the Church undoubtedly accepted it? - The first Fathers of the Church used to say: The wise men of ancient times, who are frequently spoken of as pagans, are in reality Christians in a far deeper sense! The early Fathers of the Church undoubtedly thought that the heathens who lived before the Mystery of Golgotha were CHRISTIANS.

This is what took place through the Mystery of Golgotha: That Being which in the past could not be found here upon the earth, which could only be found outside the earth through initiation into the Mysteries of Heaven, that Being was then incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth and lived upon the earth in Jesus of Nazareth. He was crucified and laid into the earth, and finally He appeared to His initiated disciples as RISEN TO LIFE AGAIN in a spiritual body.

Through the Mystery of Golgotha, the high Sun-Being descended from cosmic heights to the earth. Christ, Who thus came from the spiritual worlds and passed through death, Christ whose physical body was laid into the earth, had His initiated disciples even after His death, after His resurrection. And the teachings which He imparted to His initiated disciples should now be brought to the knowledge of many men, so that they may share in the progressive course of human evolution.

You see, my dear friends, in reality the old initiates were instructed by Beings that lived outside the earth. The instruction imparted in the oldest Mysteries of humanity was given in such a way that the disciples of the Mysteries were prepared for a

spiritual vision outside their body. Through this vision they learned of the existence of Beings such as the high Sun-Being seen by Zarathustra. This vision also enabled them to see Beings belonging to the different Hierarchies. The spiritual language spoken by one of these Beings that thus came down and taught the initiates of ancient times, should be imagined as a language through which it was possible to impart these teachings to men in ancient times. For in the past, the human beings had divine teachers. Also Christ was one of these divine teachers, when He imparted His teachings to His disciples, after His resurrection. Yet the teaching that Christ could give, was one that the divine teachers of ancient times were unable to transmit.

The divine teachers of ancient times spoke of the Mysteries of Birth, but they could not tell men anything of the Mysteries of Death, for death had never been experienced in the divine world. In the world from which the divine teachers of ancient times came down to the ancient initiates, there were no Beings that had passed through death. Death was something that could only be experienced upon the earth, by human beings. From heavenly heights the gods looked down upon the human beings, and only obtained an external knowledge of death. But Christ was the One Who learned to know death upon the earth, by incarnating in a human being. Christ did not only appear from time to time in a human body, as did the teachers of ancient times, but in the same way in which the human soul lives in the human body, so He lived in it as a God. Christ really learned to know death, for He passed through death. Yet He experienced other things besides.

You see, my dear friends, if Christ had only passed through all the experiences that so from His Baptism in the Jordan to His Crucifixion and death upon the Cross, He could not have spoken of the Mysteries that He revealed to His initiated disciples after His Resurrection.

Everything in the whole wide world was known to the divine teachers who came down to the earth in ancient times, everything in the world, except the Mysteries connected with the interior of the earth. These divine teachers knew that spiritual Beings ruled in the interior of the earth, that these Beings were different from the other gods who came down to the human beings before the time of the Mystery of Golgotha. The Greeks, for instance, knew of their existence, and spoke of them in their mythology as the TITANS.

Christ was the first God of the upper worlds who learned to know the interior of the earth, because He was laid into the earth. It is important to bear in mind that Christ became acquainted with a sphere that was hitherto unknown to the Gods of the upper worlds. The secret that Christ revealed to His disciples after His Resurrection was that also the Gods have their own development.

This is the secret discovered by ST. PAUL, through his natural initiation at Damascus. It stirred him through and through

to know that the forces of the earth had now become connected with a power that could in the past only be found in the Sun.

Why did Paul, when he was still SAUL, persecute the followers of Christ ? - Because through the ancient Chaldean initiation Saul had been taught that Christ only lives outside in the cosmos, and that it was a mistake to believe that Christ lived in the earth. And then, when Paul was enlightened before Damascus, he realised for the first time that he had been mistaken in believing only what had existed in the past. Something that did not exist in the past had now become a real fact: what once lived only in the Sun, had now descended to the earth and henceforth it lived in the forces of the earth.

Those who first spread the knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha knew that the Mystery of Golgotha was an event that concerned not only the earth, but the whole world. And in the early Christian times, the true initiates still spoke of this world-event as follows : -

The first Christian initiates were so deeply initiated that they knew : The Christ, Who now appears to us as the Being that passed through the Mystery of Golgotha at the beginning of our era, descended to the SUN from still greater heights. Zarathustra saw Him there, upon the Sun. The power of Christ then passed over into the RAYS OF THE SUN, where He was discovered by the Egyptian initiates. And then His power lived in the ENVIRONMENT OF THE EARTH, where the Greek initiates were able to perceive Him. Now Christ should be looked upon as the Being who lived among men in an earthly body; we should perceive Him in such a way that He appears to us in His true form as the RISEN ONE, as the One who lives in the earth and discovered the Mysteries of the Earth, as the One who gradually allows these Mysteries to flow into the evolution of humanity.

This is the esoteric teaching of Christianity, whose immense warmth of expression exercised a deep influence in very secluded schools during the first Christian centuries; and gradually spread out from the East in a mysterious and secret way.

MITHRAS AND CHRIST.

From a Lecture by RUDOLF STEINER, dated Nov. 27th, 1916.

How can the link existing between one who is living here on earth and another who has died become a real connection, that continues beyond death with undiminished strength ? - It can become a real link if the one who lives here on earth understands that which reaches beyond the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai - that is to say, beyond the inclinations that can be developed here, as a result of the fact that we belong to a definite human

community ?

Suppose someone remaining behind here on earth felt, for instance, that he belongs to a certain nation, and were he then to lose someone through death - who, as we know, would be already preparing himself to join another nation - then his connection with the dead could not remain untroubled. The connection can only be a super-earthly one through the fact that both acknowledge Christ, that both understand Christ within that element which is above human differentiations. For what did St. John the Baptist say when Christ Jesus came to be baptized ? - "Behold the Lamb of God, that beareth the sins of the world!" These are words whose full significance would make us grow pale, if we were really to grasp their profound meaning.

We might ask: Why was CHRIST victorious, and not Mithras? At the time when Christianity spread from the East to the West, the Mithras cult spread along the whole course of the Danube, as far as western Europe, as far as France and Spain. Yet Christianity overcame the Mithras cult. Why ? - Because the Mithras cult had grown out of forces that rose above the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai and that sought to reach the World-Illuminator, the World-Regent. And what then is the Christ ? - Christ is the One who, for the sake of the earth's evolution, took upon Himself everything that is connected with the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai, everything that fetters man to the earth. He bears the sins of the world - that is to say, those sins that have come into the world through human differentiations, through the diversities and distinctions in men. Christ is a Being before Whom we must say to ourselves: I belong to a particular community of people, but through the fact that I belong to this community, that is to say, to something connected with earthly life, I separate myself from the heavenly life. Only a Being that does not enter into human differentiations can save me from this. Only because I understand the Christ in me, the Christ Who leads me beyond earthly differentiations, Who teaches me to feel that what is produced by such differentiations is suffering and brings with it death, only through this I re-discover my connection with the spiritual worlds.

Everything that entered humanity through the fact that these differentiations arose, has been taken away from mankind, because Christ entered the world. Christ could therefore not be a Mithras, leading man above his own self, but He could only be THAT God Who descended to the earth, taking away, wiping away the sins resulting from such diversities in man.

Mithras rushes through the world with a sword in his hand and he drives it into the side of man's lower nature, in order to kill it; and the lower nature dies under Mithras. Christ appears in contrast as the LAMB OF GOD, that takes upon Himself man's lower nature, in order to redeem it.

A deep meaning lies concealed in this symbol, an infinitely deep meaning! The idea of Christ can therefore not be

separated from the idea of death and the idea of resurrection.

What brings death to man is at the same time that which leads him into earthly life. Yet we know that in man there is MORE than that which leads him into the atmosphere of the earth: In man there is the Christ, Who leads him forth again: - "In Christo morimur". If we understand this, only then do we understand the Christ and know that we are united with Him.

That is why the ancient gods could be represented as triumphant beings; and that is why Christ could only be represented through man's connection with SUFFERING and DEATH, for He suffers everything that passes through the world in the form of human differentiations. Christ is thus the One who leads us through death, who leads us back into the spiritual world; but He is at the same time that spiritual Being Whom we may approach here, upon the earth, by passing through Maya, or through the sense illusion.

In the same way that Christ was born here out of Maya, so we must approach Him by passing ourselves beyond Maya; that is to say, by appealing to Him in everything that reaches into the sphere of Maya and that nevertheless is not Maya, but a HIGHER REALITY

Men on earth will still need a long time before they begin to turn towards this Christ-service; yet we shall have to take Christianity seriously, to take it seriously once more. Theologians take it least seriously of all, for they often dispute as to whether Christ did perform miracles and cast out devils through miraculous forces.

Now it is quite unnecessary to dispute as to whether Christ really did cast out devils, if only we ourselves learn in the right way to cast them out where they can now be driven out, and learn to imitate His miracles. It is the destiny and karma of our time that we have not as yet gained the power to cast out devils in a higher way, just as the men of past ages cast them out through atavistic forces. Yet we may already begin to cast out such demons of whom we spoke yesterday, for they really exist and it is a negative superstition to believe that it is not so.

How can we drive them out? - Men will be convinced that these demons can be cast out, if the service that is to-day unholy, becomes a holy service, that is to say, permeated with the consciousness of Christ. This means in other words: We pass over to sacramentalism, if we are conscious of the fact that Christ is behind us in everything we do, and that we should only do those things in the world in which Christ can help us. For if we do other things, Christ must suffer for them. That means: Christ continues to be crucified in men's actions. The Crucifixion is not only one definite event, but it is a continual, progressive event. We crucify Christ, so long as we do not drive out the demons, by transforming an external, mechanical action into a holy

one. That must be the starting point of our education towards a real Christianity. What was cultivated symbolically in the ancient rites of Christianity must be understood by the whole world. Humanity must learn to deal with Nature as the gods dealt with it; men should not build machines without any interest, but everything they do, should be the performance of a divine service; SACRAMENTALISM should be brought into everything. Beginnings can already be made in many directions.

In two points above all can men begin to-day to develop sacramentalism. First of all in EDUCATION AND TEACHING. If we look upon every human being that enters the world through birth in such a way that we see him bringing with him his Christ forces, we shall feel the right kind of reverence for the growing child and arrange his whole education accordingly, particularly the instruction we give him. In other words, we shall endeavour to call into life a "sacramental element" in education (perhaps we may discuss this more in detail on some other occasion.) If a sacramental element is thus called into life, if we look upon education and teaching as a divine service and really transform them into one, **then** we begin to spiritualize what religion calls "Baptism".

If we then endeavour to be conscious of what we call KNOWLEDGE, by filling our soul with ideas on the spiritual world, so that we realise: "The Spirit now enters our being; we unite ourselves with the Spirit" - if we can look upon this as a "communion" and call into life real knowledge ("Thinking is the real communion of mankind" - you will find that this sentence was uttered before 1886), if we are really able to make this alive in us, then the symbolic altar-sacrament of the past becomes a universal, sacramental experience of knowledge.

In this direction must man be Christianized. Then you will see that indeed, everywhere in life and in everything connected with Christ, reality penetrates into the Maya, and you will see that it is un-Christian to look upon reality as modern science looks upon it in its scientific world-conception, eminently UN-CHRISTIAN.

POETRY AND THE MOULDING OF LIFE.

After a Lecture delivered on the 25th of December 1940.

By ALBERT STEFFEN.

Christmas day and the morning hours of December 25th will never lose their meaning in the history of the Anthroposophical Movement. For seventeen years ago, at that very hour, at 10 a.m., Rudolf Steiner laid the foundation stone of the General Anthroposophical Society, thus placing into the cultural life of the present a community based upon insight into the spiritual